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ANALYSIS OF KEY FACTORS DRIVING JAPAN'S
MILITARY NORMALIZATION

by

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September 2017

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**ANALYSIS OF KEY FACTORS DRIVING JAPAN'S MILITARY
NORMALIZATION**

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ABSTRACT

Japanese military normalization is a complex process—it is not too far from the truth to say it might represent a transformation of the nation—and for any such complex process, there are multiple impetuses. This thesis is organized around a categorical step-by-step analysis of the key driving factors of Japan’s military normalization. The areas of prime ministerial leadership, regional security threats, alliance issues, and military-industrial complex were chosen because of the encompassing nature of their influence on the future of the Japanese military. The potential of what could be perceived as an obvious and overwhelming threat to the Japanese people, vis-à-vis some Chinese or North Korean aggression or threats to Japanese citizens abroad, does not seem to be enough to sway the opinions of millions of Japanese from their deeply ingrained pacifist ideology. Only the right recipe of factors can affect the prevalence of this pacifist ideology, and security issues and economic factors have to be presented in the proper light by a strong and charismatic leader with well-defined goals. The evaluation of each of the four chosen driving factors of Japan’s military normalization reinforces their position as main drivers and provides insight into their sustainability and the future of Japanese security.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADIZ	Air Defense Identification Zone
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
JSDF	Japanese Self-Defense Forces
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MDA	maritime domain awareness
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
QZSS	Quasi-Zenith Satellite System
SDF	Self-Defense Forces
SSA	space situational awareness

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I. INTRODUCTION

Japanese military normalization has been incrementally advancing for decades, established by changes in Japan's defense budget, military deployments, weapons acquisitions and exports, space program, and reinterpretation of its constitution. Japanese Prime Minister Abe appears to have done more to advance normalization than other prime ministers, but is he the only actor who deserves credit? How important are regional security issues to the momentum and sustainment of normalization? The United States has openly promoted Japan's remilitarization, but is the alliance still strong enough to effectively influence Japanese policy? Is Japanese military industry integral to driving normalization, or just a product of other drivers?

The answers to these questions will provide insight into what is driving Japan's military normalization, and give analysts enhanced capacity to evaluate a security evolution as it transpires and determine the longer-term consequences facing Japan and greater East Asian security. Though a number of advancements have been made concerning Japanese defense, not all of them are likely to endure. Assessing the key factors driving Japan's military normalization should reveal the sustainability of observed changes and produce a reasonable prediction of the trajectory of Japan's remilitarization.

A. THE ORIGINS OF JAPANESE NORMALIZATION

After World War II, Japan's role in Asian regional security began with debate, confusion, and a decree of pacifism. Since then, the end of the Cold War, rise of China, increased threat and volatility of North Korea, island disputes, and the changing nature of U.S. interests and alliance patterns have caused a gradual increase in pressure on the Japanese security establishment. Some in Japan think the time has come to be more independent. Other interests in the region, such as South Korea and Taiwan, are considering the possible benefits and drawbacks of a militarily stronger Japan in the face of the changing security environment. As World War II memories fade, and regional security pressures grow, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces have found a way to challenge their past and normalize their role in subtle ways.

When the United States defeated Japan in World War II, members of General MacArthur's staff wrote a new constitution for Japan. While the world has changed in unimaginable ways since the end of World War II, the Japanese constitution has not. Its Article 9 abolished Japan's right to maintain a military or wage war. Despite the now-great strength of Japan, Article 9 still stands, and states:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

(2) To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.¹

It was thought at the time that Japan would eventually re-write, or amend, its constitution when the time was right. It has been reinterpreted, but the document has not been amended since its enactment. Instead, Article 9 has been stretched since nearly the beginning, and continues to be stretched.

From the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War, there was very little normalization occurring either materially or politically. For four decades, Japanese Self-Defense Forces were poised against the Soviets for political, security, and U.S. alliance purposes.² When the balance of power began to disintegrate in 1989, Japan's military focus slowly began to shift toward Chinese and other emerging regional threats. According to Samuels, “the Gulf War in 1991 and the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993–94 were catalysts for a long-sought Japanese awakening to the importance of security.”³

Now that Japan is forced to defend against possible terrorism, North Korean missile attacks, and Chinese threats, the case for normalization has transformed. Upon gaining power, anti-mainstream and anti-pacifist leaders such as Junichiro Koizumi and

¹ Government of Japan, *Constitution of Japan*, May 3, 1947, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html.

² Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), Kindle.

³ Ibid., loc. 1610 of 8577.

Shinzo Abe have been able to make real changes to military policy and capability.⁴ After the events of September 11, 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi was able to establish new doctrine leading to the normalization trajectory the Japanese military is still on today.

Part of the reason this process has not gone as far as constitutional amendment is that there is not a pressing need. A cursory examination of Japanese defenses reveals that Japan does, in fact, have a military. The air, land, and sea forces operate under the name “Japanese Self-Defense Forces” (JSDF), and are formidably capable. According to Samuels and Schoff, “Japan’s Self-Defense Forces, which began as the National Police Reserve during the Korean War, became a robust and lethal military force despite Japan’s pacifist constitution and early public opposition.”⁵

In spite of the pacifist constitution, Japan’s spending on defense is extraordinary. The defense budget is the seventh largest in the world, and military acquisitions of weapons and technology have been world class.⁶ This level of defense spending might ordinarily seem appropriate given Japan’s economic standing and might, but Japan is not ordinary. Defense spending continues to increase, and in 2015 the *Diplomat* reported, “the defense budget marks the third straight year of increased defense spending and represents a 2.8 percent rise over Japan’s previous fiscal year. The change is consistent with other decisions regarding Japan’s defense made under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).”⁷

While some Japanese military normalization is *in reaction* to regional security issues, it is also *provoking a reaction* in regional security relations. With every step Japan takes toward normalization, there is backlash from China and the Koreas. Nearly all of the military hardware acquired by Japan could have the dual use of aggressive strikes in addition to defense, which makes China and the Koreas nervous. According to Leaf,

⁴ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, loc. 1796 of 8577.

⁵ Richard J. Samuels and James L. Schoff, “Japan’s Nuclear Hedge: Beyond ‘Allergy’ and Breakout,” in *Strategic Asia 2013–14: Asia in the Second Nuclear Age*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis, Abraham M. Denmark, and Travis Tanner (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2013).

⁶ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2015* (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁷ Ankit Panda, “Japan Approves Largest-Ever Defense Budget,” *Diplomat*, January 14, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/japan-approves-largest-ever-defense-budget/>.

“With more than 240,000 active personnel, about 400 fighter jets, three pseudo aircraft carriers, sixteen submarines, and forty-seven destroyers, the Self-Defense Forces can project offensive power outside Japan. Its missions have expanded beyond Japan’s own security needs.”⁸

In August of 2013, Japan announced its new (third) aircraft carrier, known as an Izumo-class Helicopter Destroyer.⁹ According to Keck, “It is the largest warship Japan has fielded since WWII, and about 50 percent bigger (in terms of displacement) than Japan’s current largest ship, the Hyuga-class Helicopter Destroyer.”¹⁰ Of course, given Japan’s unique policy stance, the carrier will only be used in defense and for disaster relief. According to McCurry, “much of the military hardware included in Japan’s new budget is designed to monitor outlying territories and repel any attempt to invade island chains in the East China Sea.”¹¹ After the unveiling of the helicopter carrier, China’s Defense Ministry said, “We are concerned over Japan’s constant expansion of its military equipment. Japan’s Asian neighbors and the international community need to be highly vigilant about this trend. Japan should learn from history, adhere to its policy of self-defense and abide by its promise to take the road of peaceful development.”¹²

B. THE FOUR FACTORS

This research intends to analyze the driving factors of remilitarization, rather than the history and evolution of the trajectory. The thesis focuses on four factors most likely responsible for current Japanese military normalization: the weight of prime ministerial leadership, the influence of regional security threats, pressure from military manufacturers, and the persuasiveness of alliance issues.

⁸ Paul J. Leaf, “Promise and Potential Peril: Japan’s Military Normalization,” *Diplomat*, September 4, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/promise-and-potential-peril-japans-military-normalization/>.

⁹ Zachary Keck, “Japan Unveils ‘Aircraft Carrier in Disguise,’” *Diplomat*, August 7, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/08/japans-unveils-aircraft-carrier-in-disguise/>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Justin McCurry, “Japan Increases Defence Budget amid Tensions with China,” *Guardian*, December 17, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17/japan-increases-defence-budget-tensions-china>.

¹² Keck, “Japan Unveils ‘Aircraft.’”

The first is prime ministerial leadership, though this might get excessive credit in popular accounts. At this point, media sources give much of the credit to Prime Minister Abe for the current momentum of normalization.¹³ But when the United States government announced a pivot to Asia, most people did not think it was based on the president's personal agenda. Most people pointed to the rise of China, the end of wars in the Middle East, and regional shifts in reliance on fossil fuels, among other issues. Is Japan different? When it comes to the encompassing and materiel changes to the Japanese military, is Prime Minister Abe merely the instrument of democracy in Japan and the nation's call for greater security, or is he really driving change above and beyond public sentiment? It is reasonable to assume that policies driven by the people of Japan would prove more effective, given that prime ministers have limits on their power and longevity.

And where would Abe be without the successful efforts of Koizumi? Some of the more recent powers of the prime minister's office came from changes back in 2001 that strengthened "a wide array of national security policies and budgetary powers; the Japanese Prime Minister has never been more presidential," according to Samuels.¹⁴ Prime Minister Koizumi was able to transform foreign policy making to bear more executive level influence.¹⁵ Of course, though Prime Minister Koizumi was the first to take advantage of these changes, all subsequent prime ministers enjoy the spoils as well. This thesis will analyze both charismatic leaders in an effort to flesh out what makes them more successful, and ponder if Koizumi's legacy can be duplicated or improved upon.

Japan's security environment, meanwhile, is more stressed than ever before in postwar history. According to Pyle, "the key to understanding modern Japan's abrupt changes and wide swings of international behavior lies in two major factors: the nature of the external order, and the distinctive strategy and style of Japan's ruling elite for dealing

¹³ Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pekkanen, "Japan in 2014: All about Abe," *Asian Survey* 55, no. 1 (January–February 2015), doi: 10.1525/as.2015.55.1.103.

¹⁴ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, loc. 1803 of 8577.

¹⁵ Tomohito Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy: Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

with that order.”¹⁶ Despite this clear “chicken and egg” scenario, external threats and internal politics are very influential on their own and arguably symbiotically complementary.

Japanese military capability has expanded exponentially in recent years. According to Bitzinger, “Japan’s current military modernization efforts are driven by three factors: the need to deal with new emerging regional threats, the requirement for increased interoperability with an expeditionary U.S. military, and the desire for the “normalization” of Japanese foreign and defense policy.”¹⁷ Bitzinger is unclear whether the “desire” is internal or external, and it is likely a combination of both, but it is important to note that the source and power of the “desire” will likely influence how normalization is perceived.

When justifying the achievement of what appears to be a clearly aggressive capability for the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, such as an amphibious marine unit, the struggle over disputed islands is always first on the list. Chinese naval and air activity around the disputed Senkaku islands is well established. If Japanese action is limited to re-taking its own islands, then it could be construed as self-defense. The point is that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces have developed an offensive capability, justified by real and tangible regional security concerns.

Japan’s military-industrial complex is also becoming more robust. As Hughes writes, “Collusion between industrial, political, bureaucratic, and military elements in Japan’s defense-production structures has increased, a sign of significant remilitarization.”¹⁸ Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu argue that the Japanese military-industrial complex is driving the military use of space: “With investments already in the commercial space industry that were not turning a profit, corporations looked to salvage

¹⁶ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 19.

¹⁷ Richard A. Bitzinger, “Military Modernization in the Asia-Pacific: Assessing New Capabilities” in *Strategic Asia 2010–11: Asia’s Rising Power and America’s Continued Purpose*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis, Andrew Marble, and Travis Tanner (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010).

¹⁸ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s Remilitarization* (New York: Routledge, 2009), loc. 1807 of 3585, Kindle.

or bolster their bottom lines by pushing their allies in the government to develop military space projects.”¹⁹ Though it was fairly unpredictable market circumstances that may have initiated Japan’s military use of space, Japan is now fully invested. Given the cost of such programs, anything short of longevity would likely be democratically unpopular and possibly labeled as misappropriating funds. Commercial space interests have demonstrated their business and political savvy, but it is likely that North Korea’s Taepodong test in 1998, and China’s anti-satellite test in 2007, gave serious initial fuel to their petition.

This thesis will examine if military advancements in technology and acquisitions really do take on a momentum of their own. How much is the growing defense industry in Japan responsible for long-term effects on normalization? It is easier to repeal policies and laws than it is to recall defense satellites or to justify abandoning programs after billions of dollars have been spent. Japan legalized the military use of space in 2008, which “may reflect bottom-up pressure from industry,” according to Moltz.²⁰

Although the current Japanese security policy trajectory could change its status, the U.S. alliance remains invaluable for Japan. An advanced form of the alliance is collective self-defense, which was applauded by the United States and approved by the Japanese government in 2015. Could enhanced military ties contribute to normalization, or are the politics that enabled a relatively bold move detrimental in the long term? The current interpretation “now allows the country to militarily help a ‘foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan,’ on the condition that the attack ‘threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn (Japanese) people’s right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,’ but with a minimum use of force.²¹

¹⁹ Saadia M. Pekkanen and Paul Kallender-Umezu, *In Defense of Japan: From the Market to the Military in Space Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 2.

²⁰ James Clay Moltz, *Asia’s Space Race: National Motivations, Regional Rivalries, and International Risks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 44.

²¹ Akira Kawasaki and Céline Nahory, “Japan’s Decision on Collective Self-Defense in Context,” *Diplomat*, October 3, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/10/japans-decision-on-collective-self-defense-in-context/>.

The evaluation of each of the four chosen driving factors of Japan's military normalization reinforces their position as main drivers and provides insight on their sustainability and the future of Japanese security. The areas of prime ministerial leadership, regional security threats, military-industrial complex, and alliance issues were chosen because of the encompassing nature of their influence on the future of the Japanese military. In-depth analysis of such supplemental factors as the constitution, the bureaucracy, the budget, democratic processes, and the media would be relevant as well, but this falls outside the scope of the thesis.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTERS

Kantei is the Japanese word for Japan's version of the White House—the Prime Minister's official residence. Academics, journalists, and politicians refer to the Kantei in much the same way Americans refer to the White House: as a center of government power and representing the executive branch of the government. In Japan, unlike the White House, the power of the Kantei has evolved significantly in recent decades. As late as 1987–89, Ichiro Ozawa, the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary under Prime Minister Takeshita, wrote that a Japanese Prime Minister is “nothing more than master of ceremonies for the ritual at hand.”²² Times have changed, and the process started in earnest only seven years later under Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. According to Shinoda, Hashimoto “and his cabinet implemented wide-ranging administrative reform that culminated in a series of institutional changes in January 2001.”²³ Today, no one would mock the power of the Kantei. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was the first to take advantage of the reforms in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe carries the powerful torch today. Koizumi and Abe have been the only Prime Ministers, to date, to effectively utilize these administrative reforms to influence security policy and drive normalization of the Japanese military.

Japan now has a long history of pacifism instilled both culturally and by the post-war constitution. Japanese citizens were comfortable avoiding most everything to do with a real military and war from the end of the Korean War to the end of Cold War. National sentiment only began to change upon dealing with issues surrounding the first Gulf War in 1991. According to Shinoda, many Japanese “felt embarrassed about their country’s inability to provide anything more than financial assistance for the 1991 Gulf War.”²⁴ Within Japan’s democracy, only a prime minister with significant popular support can effect changes in deep-rooted ideals against war and remilitarization. Additionally,

²² Ichiro Ozawa, *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation*, trans. Louisa Rubinfain (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994), 24.

²³ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 11.

²⁴ Ibid., 7.

enough time has passed since World War II for some members of subsequent generations of Japanese to yearn for normal international power consistent with Japan's economy and world presence.

After the Cold War, an era of rapid change became clearly evident. According to Samuels, "fifteen new security-related laws were enacted between 1991 and 2003."²⁵ According to Oros in *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice*, "the Diet has amended the Self-Defense Force Law over fifty times since 1989, compared to only once from its adoption in 1954 though the end of the Cold War."²⁶ Given the timing of the change, coinciding with the transformation of the world security environment, it appears that Japanese defense policy was initially reacting to the new world order. The 1990s were also a tumultuous time in Japanese politics, with the LDP in disarray as prime ministers struggled through the looming economic crisis and the political party system underwent significant realignments.

By the end of the 1990s, Japan appeared to become more comfortable with the post-Cold War era, and the emergence of a significant exogenous threat from North Korea in the form of missile testing likely sharpened Japan's efforts on security policy. According to Oros, "The Taepodong over-flight stirred the Diet into action after August 1998—including so-called emergency legislation, the formal study of constitutional revision in both houses of the Diet, the decisions to deploy the SDF abroad for combat support missions to the Indian Ocean and Iraq, and greater defense cooperation with the United States."²⁷ Security policy and military change began to come from within, rather than merely yielding to the changing world order.

According to Shinoda, "The reforms instituted under the Hashimoto administration (1996–1998), however, gave the Cabinet Secretariat new authority to draft and plan policies."²⁸ This authority made the prime minister and the Kantei much

²⁵ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, loc. 2111 of 8577.

²⁶ Andrew L. Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 178.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 14.

stronger and more effective. As Kabashima and Steel argue, “Hashimoto sought public backing for his reforms by stressing the importance of prime ministerial leadership and dramatizing the situation with his now-famous comment that he would accomplish reform even if he became ‘engulfed in flames.’”²⁹

Reforms included the ability to establish ad hoc offices for a more expeditious response to specific policy issues, which greatly increased the size of the Kantei staff, and the authority of the cabinet to screen and approve high-level ministerial appointments.³⁰ More specifically, Kabashima and Steel state, “The changes to the policy making apparatus now mean that prime ministers have the tools available to push through their own agendas.”³¹ Japanese policies were usually generated from the bottom-up, but the Kantei reforms changed the dynamic dramatically for some policy areas.

Though only in office for two and half years, Prime Minister Hashimoto’s changes had built-in momentum and increasing effects on subsequent prime ministers through today. Prior to 2000, the Kantei rarely formulated policy and was only in charge of two non-policy laws.³² After the Hashimoto reforms, Prime Minister Mori enacted the IT Basic Law to advance Japan’s technology infrastructure, and Prime Minister Koizumi “enacted seven major laws and three other measures...and six [of them were] directly related to national security.”³³

The influence of the prime minister can be categorized as both formal and informal. Formally, prime ministers have the legal authority to enact policy and take action in times of crisis. Informally, the media allows them to leverage their personal charisma to gain public support for their initiatives. The administrative reforms were available to every subsequent prime minister, but Koizumi and Abe seemed best equipped to actually exploit these changes.

²⁹ Ikuo Kabashima and Gill Steel, *Changing Politics in Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 106.

³⁰ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 69, 75.

³¹ Kabashima and Steel, *Changing Politics*, 108.

³² Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 79.

³³ Ibid., 80.

A. KOIZUMI

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had been in office less than five months when the events of 9/11 occurred. His popularity and leadership style were exactly what Japanese nationalists needed in that time of crisis. While the charisma and leadership of the prime minister were significant, the importance of timing cannot be understated. Without the impetus to respond to the crisis of a newly realized international terrorist threat, it is possible that Koizumi's leadership may have gone unfulfilled, and major policy changes may never have come to fruition—but given comparison with his contemporaries, Koizumi's influence on normalization would likely still have been relevant.

Reports indicate Prime Minister Koizumi handled the Japanese response to the 9/11 attacks with speed and confidence. Unlike the limited and bureaucratic response to the Gulf crisis in the early 1990s, the 9/11 reaction was efficient and effective, and placed command directly in the hands of the prime minister. Shinoda states, “Koizumi responded quickly to the 9/11 incident. Forty-five minutes after the attacks occurred, he established a liaison office at the Situation Center of the Cabinet to gather information. An hour later, when the severity of the situation had been assessed, he upgraded the office to the Emergency Anti-Terrorism Headquarters, with himself in charge.”³⁴ There was no committee, and no consultation with an entire ministry; there was just swift action. Before the end of September 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi announced his plan to dispatch SDF forces to aid the United States, offered \$10 million to fund rescue and cleanup operations, and personally visited President George W. Bush to demonstrate his support.³⁵

The way in which Koizumi handled the incident only served to enhance his popularity, which in turn facilitated his control of the situation. “Public support for strong leadership helped enable Koizumi’s quick response. In a policy speech on September 27, Koizumi expressed his determination to implement his plan quickly. Making such an

³⁴ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 90.

³⁵ Yū Uchiyama, *Koizumi and Japanese Politics: Reform Strategies and Leadership Style*, trans. Carl Freire (New York: Routledge, 2010), 84.

international commitment without traditional discussion and consultation, however, drew loud criticism from the opposition parties and even some LDP members. Yet the criticism faltered in the face of increased public support of the Koizumi cabinet after the announcement,” according to Shinoda.³⁶ The strength of Japan’s democracy dictates that the prime minister is only as strong as his support. There are times when the opposition is weak and executive leadership has more latitude, but the system in place usually has the prime minister fully engaged and responsive to the public.

Prime Minister Koizumi was able to institute major changes to foreign affairs and defense policy because of the initiative he took immediately following 9/11. His administration submitted legislation to the Diet in order to more fully assist in countering terrorism. The Japanese government passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law by the end of October 2001, and it “significantly expanded the range of activities in which the SDF can participate overseas; for this reason, it has been described as ‘a turning point in postwar security policy,’” according to Uchiyama.³⁷

While the legislation was passed relatively quickly, implementing it was still a challenge. Change is difficult, especially under such long established precedent. Koizumi consistently backed the United States, and personally proclaimed support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. During the May 2003 U.S.-Japan Summit meeting, Koizumi stated, “the dispatch of the SDF and others to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq was something for Japan itself to decide, and Japan wished to make a contribution commensurate with its national power and standing.”³⁸

In truth, Koizumi’s determination to send ground troops to Iraq was greater than the majority of Japanese citizens’, and certainly greater than the opposition’s. When Japanese diplomats were killed in Iraq on November 29, 2003, it seemed like the entire country was ready keep the SDF at home. Koizumi was unmoved, and angry.³⁹ The

³⁶ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 93.

³⁷ Uchiyama, *Koizumi and Japanese Politics*, 87.

³⁸ “Overview of U.S.-Japan Summit Meeting,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, May 26, 2003, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/pmv0305/overview.html>.

³⁹ Mark Simkin, “Japan’s Iraq Commitment under Pressure after Diplomat Deaths,” transcript, ABC News, December 1, 2003, <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2003/s1000519.htm>.

prime minister was quoted as saying, “We have a responsibility to provide humanitarian and reconstruction aid in Iraq. There is no change to our policy of not giving in to terrorism.”⁴⁰

Though the prime minister was democratically supported, Koizumi’s leadership style took full advantage and may have influenced public opinion significantly. The combination of popular support and Koizumi’s charisma created a kind of national symbiotic relationship, with the public influencing the prime minister, and vice versa.

Prime Minister Koizumi was a skilled politician not only with the public, but with the opposition as well. According to Shinoda, “In order to avoid Diet passage by the ruling parties alone, the Koizumi government constantly sought cooperation from the DPJ.”⁴¹ By 2003, “the DPJ involved itself directly in the policy process” of emergency legislation by offering its own version, reaching agreement after a weeklong conference, and helping achieve an overwhelming majority for its enactment.⁴² Luckily for the Koizumi administration, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) was striving for greater legitimacy and often cooperated with nationalist goals in order to earn respect as a more viable opposition and future alternative.

The power of the Kantei also enabled Koizumi’s success with the bureaucracy. Koizumi’s appeal garnered public support at a time when leadership was desperately needed, and resulted in a political success story. According to Kabashima and Steel, “to achieve his goals, Koizumi used the administrative system that Nakasone and Hashimoto had bequeathed to him in a top-down style. He was able to pursue reform more proactively when his support ratings improved.”⁴³

Prior to the 9/11 response, previous international incidents and diplomatic efforts were handled and led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). The shock experienced

⁴⁰ Simkin, “Japan’s Iraq Commitment.”

⁴¹ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 137.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kabashima and Steel, *Changing Politics*, 114.

by the entire world, and the immediate pressure felt by governments around the globe called for quick, decisive action that a ministry is ill equipped for. According to Shinoda,

The Kantei can take advantage of the political influence of the prime minister and the CCS, can provide these political leaders with the necessary administrative support, and is in a better position to pursue national interests compared to MOFA, which may put a higher priority on friendly relations with foreign countries. Most important, as the Constitution gives authority to manage foreign affairs to the cabinet, and not to MOFA, it is more legitimate for the prime minister and his supporting organ, the Cabinet Secretariat, to play the central role.⁴⁴

Thanks to the Hashimoto reforms, the system in Japan had evolved enough to allow the prime minister to make international affairs decisions, and to let the MOFA exercise their practiced diplomacy in the aftermath.

Prime Minister Koizumi's strong legacy is incontrovertible. Yu Uchiyama describes Koizumi as a "prime minister of pathos"; intimating that his leadership and appeal were based on emotion rather than reason.⁴⁵ Uchiyama sites Koizumi's populist style, media usage, and speaking in sound bites, to back his claim.⁴⁶ However, Uchiyama also refers to Koizumi's "other dimension" of top-down leadership style to help explain how he prevailed over the opposition and accomplished structural reforms.⁴⁷ Koizumi's success and popularity were great, and left many expectations for his successor.

B. ABE'S FIRST TERM

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was born to become prime minister of Japan. His grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, was prime minister of Japan from 1957–60. His great-uncle, Eisaku Sato, was prime minister from 1964–72. His father, Shintaro Abe, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1982–86. In September of 2006, Shinzo Abe was elected to succeed Junichiro Koizumi and became Japan's youngest leader since World War II.

⁴⁴ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 145.

⁴⁵ Uchiyama, *Koizumi and Japanese Politics*, 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

As Abe was a Chief Cabinet Secretary under Koizumi, and succeeded him as prime minister, he is often compared to Koizumi. Abe was thought ready to continue the nationalist agenda, but he had a very tough act to follow. Koizumi was an exceptionally popular prime minister. According to Mark, “Promising dramatic economic reforms, the highly charismatic and plain-speaking Koizumi soon gained the highest levels of public support enjoyed by any postwar prime minister.”⁴⁸ “Koizumi’s premiership restored the fortunes of the LDP for a time, as he promoted nationalist foreign policy, alongside a more radical neoliberal economic agenda at the expense of the old LDP factions. Koizumi provided the template his protégé Abe would follow.”⁴⁹

Unfortunately, Abe had very little success during his first term. Although as Chief Cabinet Secretary, Abe focused on foreign affairs and national security issues, as Prime Minister Abe was elected on the promise of domestic economic growth.⁵⁰ However, his growth-first policy initiative was blocked by Ministry of Finance officials who wanted a tax increase, his attempt to cut the road construction budget was thwarted by strong opposition, and he generally failed to garner the administrative support of the Kantei.⁵¹ To exacerbate a difficult situation, according to Mark, “his first term was particularly damaged by a scandal where over fifty million pension accounts were lost, which dramatically culminated with the suicide of the agriculture minister. Abe started with his approval ratings near 70 percent; these plunged within a year to around 30 percent.”⁵² Abe stepped down as prime minister after a year in office, claiming poor health in the face of such low approval ratings.

Prime Minister Abe’s first term may have been stifled by Koizumi’s lingering shadow. Vogel argued that Koizumi was so effective in his last election that “his party

⁴⁸ Craig Mark, *The Abe Restoration: Contemporary Japanese Politics and Reformation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2016), loc. 156 of 4607, Kindle.

⁴⁹ Ibid., loc. 386 of 4607.

⁵⁰ Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy*, 70.

⁵¹ Tomohito Shinoda, *Contemporary Japanese Politics: Institutional Changes and Power Shifts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), loc. 4619 of 8470, Kindle.

⁵² Mark, *Abe Restoration*, loc. 196 of 4607.

has nowhere to go but down.”⁵³ This prediction became true, as the LDP declined for years and only recovered upon the utter failure of its opposition’s short-lived rule.

C. THE DPJ

After Abe, two more men attempted to revive the LDP before finally succumbing to the opposition. Like Abe, they each lasted only one year. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda served from September 2007 to September 2008. The *New York Times* wrote

Despite his political credentials, he proved incapable of breaking a parliamentary deadlock that delayed the selection of a new central bank chief and the renewal of a law allowing Japanese ships to refuel American and other vessels involved in the war in Afghanistan. These setbacks, along with the owlish Mr. Fukuda’s own colorless style, hurt his approval ratings, which dropped below 30 percent in recent polls.⁵⁴

Prime Minister Taro Aso followed Fukuda from September 2008 to September 2009. By then, Japan was in recession and the LDP had little chance. In response to reporters about parliamentary elections in 2009, *ABC News* reported Aso as saying, “The results are very severe. … There has been a deep dissatisfaction with our party.”⁵⁵

“On August 30, 2009, Japanese voters overwhelmingly elected the Democratic Party of Japan to a majority in the powerful Lower House of Japan’s parliament. The scale of the DPJ victory, winning 308 out of 480 seats in the House of Representatives, [was] unprecedented in post-World War II Japan,” according to Oros and Tatsumi.⁵⁶ The DPJ selected Yukio Hatoyama as the first non-LDP prime minister since the brief politically tumultuous time following the LDP’s fragmentation in the early 1990s. Other than that ten months the LDP spent out of government from August 1993 to June 1994,

⁵³ Steven Vogel, “Japan after Koizumi: The Abe Opportunity,” Brookings, October 1, 2006, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/japan-after-koizumi-the-abe-opportunity/>.

⁵⁴ Martin Fackler, “Japanese Prime Minister Resigns Unexpectedly,” *New York Times*, September 1, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/world/asia/02japan.html?_r=0.

⁵⁵ Margaret Conley, “Japan’s Ruling Party Swept from Power in Historic Election,” *ABC News*, August 30, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=8445680>.

⁵⁶ Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch: Japan* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), loc. 1904 of 2901, Kindle.

the LDP had controlled the government since 1955.⁵⁷ Opposition groups had been largely unsuccessful. Tatsumi seriously downplayed the importance of platform for opposition parties, saying, “The sole role of the opposition parties, including the DPJ, was to criticize the policies presented by LDP-led governments.”⁵⁸ Tatsumi reports that the DPJ appeared “center-left in contrast to the LDP” but in reality were just anti-LDP.⁵⁹

While the DPJ was certainly anti-LDP, it also had political ideas of its own. In the DPJ’s ideal world, it would reduce the impact and nuisance of the U.S. Marines in Okinawa; reduce the spending on, and momentum of, military normalization; and bolster regional diplomatic relations at some expense to the U.S. alliance.⁶⁰ In contrast, the LDP hoped to strengthen the military and increase national independence without sacrificing the U.S. alliance.

The DPJ’s chance to change Japan did not last long. In three years and three months, three DPJ prime ministers faced serious challenges and largely failed. Prime Minister Hatoyama lasted only nine months and resigned mostly due to mishandling of the plan to relocate the Futenma Marine Corps Air Station in Okinawa.⁶¹ Prime Ministers Kan and Noda each lasted 15 months. Kan mishandled the response to a Chinese fishing trawler in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands and was heavily criticized for his government’s actions following the 3/11 earthquake and nuclear disaster.⁶² Under the same post-Hashimoto Kantei authorities and successful emergency legislation, Hatoyama and Kan failed to wield these authorities appropriately, where Koizumi succeeded. Finally, Prime Minister Noda fared the best of the three, but was not enough given the weakness of the party by that time.

⁵⁷ Oros, *Normalizing Japan*, 77.

⁵⁸ Yuki Tatsumi, “Japan under DPJ Rule: The Costs of Overemphasizing Political Leadership,” *Harvard International Review* 34, no. 3 (winter 2013): 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Paul Midford, “Foreign Policy as an Election Issue,” in *Japan Decides 2012: The Japanese General Election*, ed. Robert Pekkanen, Steve R. Reed, and Ethan Scheiner (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), doi: 10.1057/9781137346124_15.

⁶¹ Shinoda, *Contemporary Japanese Politics*, ch. 5.

⁶² Ibid., ch. 6.

The DPJ consisted of a more diverse coalition than the LDP did, and this hampered the party's effectiveness. It was difficult for the DPJ to reach consensus, and public support began to flounder, especially after the 3/11 disaster. The DPJ suffered from inexperience, lack of consensus, and a very challenging series of events in Japan.

The best way to judge the difference between the two parties is to study how effective the DPJ was when they had their chance. Unfortunately, this may not be a fair comparison. The DPJ had never had power before, and only had experience as an opposition party to a very entrenched government. The DPJ's inexperience, faults, and mishandling of incidents were excessive. The DPJ failed to work well with the bureaucracy, and, according to Tatsumi, "during the three years that it has been in power, the DPJ has repeatedly demonstrated its inability to effectively handle national security issues."⁶³

D. ABE'S SECOND CHANCE

After five years and these five additional short-term leaders from both the LDP and DPJ, Abe got his second chance at prime minister as he led the LDP back into power. The interim gave Abe a chance to reflect on his failures and reinvigorate his objectives. According to Mark, "his goals were to restore the LDP to political dominance, continue the neoliberal economic agenda of Koizumi, and most importantly of all, fulfill the nationalist legacy of his grandfather Kishi, by revamping the constitution and restoring an assertive military role for the SDF."⁶⁴ Prime Minister Abe was elected for his second term in December 2012, and won another four-year mandate upon calling and winning a new general election in December 2014. While there are no limits to the number of terms a prime minister can be elected for, the LDP presidency has a term limit of two three-year terms. Therefore, Abe likely has until at least December 2018 as LDP President and, in turn, as prime minister, unless the LDP's malleable internal rules change in the meantime or he suffers a currently unforeseen political crisis that leads his party to remove him.

⁶³ Tatsumi, "Japan under DPJ," 56.

⁶⁴ Mark, *Abe Restoration*, loc. 392 of 4607.

Prime Minister Abe has had an unmistakable influence on normalization in Japanese politics. Though he is often compared to Koizumi, Abe is different. He accomplished a successful comeback and minor success in the economic arena. Where Koizumi rode a wave of public support, Abe seems to endure against waves of public opposition and yet eventually earn the public's respect. The continued threatened security environment, persistently strong LDP, and pure strength of Abe's character allow him to keep pushing normalization.

During the first year of Abe's current time as prime minister, he gave an insightful interview to *Foreign Affairs* magazine. When asked about changing Article 9 of the constitution and normalizing the military, he responded,

Japan is the only country in the world that does not call its defense organizations a military. That is absurd, when the government is spending a total of 5 trillion yen [a year] for self-defense. I think that our constitution should stipulate that our Self-Defense Forces are military forces (as it currently does not) and should also stipulate the long-established principles of civilian control and pacifism. Even if we reactivated the right to have a collective self-defense or amended Article 9 of the constitution, that would only put Japan in the same position as other countries around the globe.⁶⁵

Discussing defense spending, Abe commented, "Over the past ten years, my country has continued to cut its defense budget. China, on the other hand, has increased its military spending 30-fold in the last 23 years. Therefore, this year, for the first time in 11 years, my government chose to slightly increase the defense budget. That is a sign of Japan's willingness to fulfill its own responsibility."⁶⁶

Prime Minister Abe's goal of changing the Constitution is not what makes him popular, nor why he has met with political success. After Japan has endured decades of economic stagnation, Abe is more known for his plan to revive the economy, called "Abenomics." Abe began his second chance with high approval ratings again based the

⁶⁵ Shinzo Abe and Jonathan Tepperman, "Japan Is Back: A Conversation with Shinzo Abe," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 4 (July–August 2013): 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7.

economic hopes, but has seen his support wane in the face of controversial defense legislation.

In August 2013, according to Mark,

since the LDP had failed to secure a two-thirds majority in the upper house, the Abe government took a further step towards “reinterpreting” the constitution instead. It appointed a new head of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, with the purpose of reinterpreting Article 9, to allow participation in collective self-defense. Since full constitutional change by legally-required public referendum was unlikely, the LDP opportunistically took any available legislative and legalistic means to achieve its goals of a more active role for the SDF.⁶⁷

The strategy was a success, and though the party did not have a supermajority, the majority it did have was enough to pass the legislation. It is important to note that this strategy would not have been possible without the Hashimoto Kantei reforms, of which successful prime ministers take full advantage.

Prime Minister Abe’s larger goal of normalizing the military thus moved one large step forward, but at possibly significant political cost. The *New York Times* said it best:

In a middle-of-the night vote that capped a tumultuous struggle with opposition parties in Parliament, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan secured final passage of legislation on Saturday [Sep 19] authorizing overseas combat missions for his country’s military, overturning a decades-old policy of reserving the use of force for self-defense.

The legislation had been expected to pass; Mr. Abe’s governing coalition controls a formidable majority in the legislature. But analysts said the grinding political battle and days of demonstrations that accompanied the effort could hurt his standing with a public already skeptical of his hawkish vision for Japan’s national security.⁶⁸

Many Japanese citizens remain proud of the country’s pacifist underpinnings, and thousands protested vehemently outside the Diet in the days and months preceding the

⁶⁷ Mark, *Abe Restoration*, loc. 654 of 4607.

⁶⁸ Jonathan Soble, “Japan’s Parliament Approves Overseas Combat Role for Military,” *New York Times*, September 18, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/19/world/asia/japan-parliament-passes-legislation-combat-role-for-military.html?_r=0.

new law's passage. Since the passing of laws that allow for easier deployment of Japanese Self-Defense Forces and authorization for collective self-defense, Abe's approval ratings have dipped as low as 38.5% during his current run as prime minister.⁶⁹

To decide whether the issues of military normalization, collective self-defense, and changing Article 9 of the constitution are pushed by the prime minister or pulled from the Japanese public, Abe plays the role of convincer. Clearly, a large number of Japanese are against the new legislation expanding military powers. In the 2013 *Foreign Affairs* interview, Prime Minister Abe admitted that more than half of Japanese nationals are for changing the constitution, but less than half are for amending Article 9.⁷⁰ Abe says that when the public is "told the rationale in more detail, they turn in favor of amendment."⁷¹ Abe states, "when we present a specific case involving, for instance, a missile launch by North Korea, and we explain to the public that Japan could shoot down missiles targeting Japan, but not missiles targeting the U.S. island of Guam, even though Japan has the ability to do so, then more than 60 percent of the public acknowledges that this is not right."⁷² However, in most cases, when the Japanese public is polled about any changes to the military or Article 9 of the constitution, more than 50% are opposed.⁷³

It is difficult to determine whether the prime minister or the strategic geopolitical environment, among other factors, has more influence driving Japanese military normalization. Prime Minister Abe is using the other factors driving normalization for his own ends, but his leadership also matters in its own right. Abe appears passionate about his normalization agenda, and he is doing his best to rally the support needed for change. He uses the regional threats that both North Korea and China pose, as well as international terrorism threats, to make his argument. This includes the unfortunate

⁶⁹ Jiji Press, "Abe Cabinet's Approval Rating Falls to 38.5% in Latest Opinion Poll," *Japan Times*, September 11, 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/09/11/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-cabinets-approval-rating-falls-38-5-latest-opinion-poll/#.V8O9Z5MrKT8>.

⁷⁰ Abe and Tepperman, "Japan Is Back," 8.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Stephen Haggard and Kevin Stahler, "Japan's Constitutional Re-Interpretation II: The Domestic Front," *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, July 16, 2014, <https://piie.com/blogs/north-korea-witness-transformation/japans-constitutional-re-interpretation-ii-domestic-front>.

beheadings of two Japanese journalists in Syria. According to Miyagi, “Abe has used the hostage incident to geographically expand the self-defense mission of the SDF into the Middle East and therefore advance his larger agenda of acquiring legislative and constitutional sanction for SDF military activity abroad.”⁷⁴

Having achieved some political success in the normalization arena, Prime Minister Abe shows no signs of relenting at the time of this writing, and he has also demonstrated restraint in the service of his longer-term goals: for example, his government has reigned in the achieved military expansions for the sake of the long-term goal of constitutional change. Prior to the July 2016 election, Mark states,

Having fought so hard to pass the security bills, the Abe government then expressed caution at its first opportunity to exercise them. Defense Minister Nakatani confirmed that GSDF units being sent to South Sudan in a rotating replacement deployment for Japan’s contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission UNMISS, would not be given a more robust armed emergency rescue mission. This would be permissible under the new security laws, but the deployment will continue under the existing rules of engagement, until at least the end of 2016. This was an unstated admission that the government wishes to reduce the potential risk of casualties, and avoid a potential voter backlash, before the upcoming upper house elections next summer.⁷⁵

Though his last two terms of leadership have returned very limited economic success, the people of Japan continue to vote for stability and experience in the face of an uncertain economic and geopolitical climate. It took almost three years to pass the collective self-defense legislation, and in nearly four years, much has been accomplished. Collective self-defense was achieved on September 19, 2015, and in its latest landslide victory on July 10, 2016, Abe’s LDP won a super-majority of two-thirds in both the Upper House of the Diet to complement its Lower House strength. According to the *New York Times*, the supermajority “could allow Mr. Abe to realize his long-held ambition of revising the clause in the Constitution that renounces war and make Japan a military

⁷⁴ Yukiko Miyagi, “How Abe Used the IS Hostage Crisis to Push Security Reform,” *East Asia Forum*, April 7, 2015, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/04/07/how-abe-used-the-is-hostage-crisis-to-push-security-reform/>.

⁷⁵ Mark, *Abe Restoration*, loc. 3254 of 4607.

power capable of global leadership.”⁷⁶ Given the landslide supermajority victory, this ambitious plan would appear to be working. But Prime Minister Abe has a great challenge, and only two years, to convince the public that changing the pacifist nature of the constitution is the right thing for Japan.

E. CONCLUSION

The power of the Kantei has clearly advanced, but it takes a strong prime minister to wield it. The geopolitical and international security environments are, of course, factors, but it is up to leaders to interpret the strategic situation and implement policy, and deploy troops. Prime Minister Hashimoto should be given credit for Kantei reforms that established greater organizational flexibility to deal with a crisis and allowed leaders to initiate top-down policies. The contrast between Koizumi and Abe, and the five one-year term prime ministers between Abe’s first and second terms, helps show that it is the individual and not the office alone that matters.

Within Japan’s democracy, even a prime minister with the modern authorities of the Kantei cannot drive normalization alone. Likewise, a security environment under threat will not drive military normalization on its own. Alliances and business interests will also not drive normalization alone. To this point, though, it seems that a prime minister, successfully wielding the authorities of the Kantei to push legislation, operating in a hazardous security environment, and herding the other factors of normalization, is in the driver’s seat.

Koizumi was Prime Minister Abe’s political mentor. While Koizumi was the first to push for, and have real success with, Japanese military normalization, he had the international fervor of 9/11 as momentum to rise upon. Abe is taking defense initiatives as far as he can, and he is taking advantage of the rising regional tensions brought by China and North Korea, in addition to terrorism.

⁷⁶ Motoko Rich, “Japan Election, a Landslide for Abe, Could Allow a Bolder Military,” *New York Times*, July 11, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/12/world/asia/japan-election-shinzo-abe.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FAbe%2C%20Shinzo%20&_r=0.

Koizumi was not the first nationalist, and Abe will not be the last, but who is next, and might the next administration rescind some of their progress? Based on the examples from each administration since Hashimoto, the answer likely depends on the strength of the next prime minister and how well they exercise the power of the Kantei. According to Pekkanen and Pekkanen, “Abe built on a set of security-related changes that had been slowly put into place over several prior administrations, such as the long-standing cooperation with the U.S. on Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and the controversial deployment of Japan’s Self-Defense Forces (SDF) for U.N. peacekeeping missions and U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.”⁷⁷ However, it was Koizumi who first deployed Japanese troops and took advantage of administrative reforms of previous governments.

Abe is a shrewd politician. Many in Japan remain steadfastly opposed to military normalization, but most are not well organized. Richards notes that Abe “appears to be preempting domestic opposition before it can solidify, in order to codify a more normalized military stance in the Japan-U.S. defense guidelines”—and this assessment was made a year before collective self-defense was achieved and two years before Abe’s winning the supermajority required (though not sufficient) to initiate constitutional change.⁷⁸ It seems as though Abe’s controversial security agenda hurts him in the polls, but not in the voting booth.

Along with normalization, collective self-defense falls in line with Prime Minister Abe’s concept of “proactive pacifism.” This sounds like an election ploy—at first. It is a merger of Abe’s nationalism-driven idea of normalization, but in keeping with the majority of Japanese ideals of pacifism. It is not quite an oxymoron: it is Abe’s method of selling normalization to the Japanese people. Despite Japan’s entrenchment in the notion of pacifism, strengthening security cooperation with the United States is a direct goal of

⁷⁷ Pekkanen and Pekkanen, “All about Abe,” 110.

⁷⁸ Clint Richards, “Timing is Everything: Abe’s Playbook for Military Normalization,” *Diplomat*, July 1, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/07/timing-is-everything-abes-playbook-for-military-normalization/>.

“proactive pacifism,” and the concept enables a merger between the U.S. alliance and Japanese nationalism.⁷⁹

If Abe does not succeed with a public referendum on changing the constitution, it is unlikely the LDP supermajority will hold, and Japanese politics may once again return to something more balanced. In that scenario, the status quo will probably hold, with constitutional change indefinitely halted. But if Abe succeeds in changing the constitution, then he will have truly created a new Japan. Regional tensions throughout Asia will be heightened, and Japan’s international standing will be forever changed. The durability of an actual change to Article 9 of the constitution would be great, and even a leader with the strength of Koizumi or Abe would face an incredible struggle to reverse the momentum of Japan’s military normalization.

⁷⁹ Kawasaki and Nahory, “Japan’s Decision.”

III. THE INFLUENCE OF REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

Japanese prime ministers' reactions to it vary, but the regional security threat is menacing and increasing, and it significantly influences national policy and normalization. The continuing military growth of China and the nuclear and missile advancements of North Korea provide constant pressure on Japan to counter regional security issues. Though the United States provides a security umbrella, the rise of China and increased volatility of North Korea offer sufficient impetus to normalize the Japanese military.

Japan is strong economically and militarily, but it is constrained by its own constitution. North Korea is economically poor, but its seemingly irrational volatility combined with its proximity make it the most threatening of all. North Korea is a precarious black hole (almost literally as seen from space) with limited international relations impaired by their persistent wartime status and isolationism. China's power and influence cannot be overstated, but its diplomatic and economic outreach tempers its danger, and makes it less threatening than North Korea for the time being.

Northeast Asia seems plagued by war memory, and diplomatic issues with Japan's history have become exploited by Japan's neighbors to decelerate Japan's remilitarization. However, the ideological divide merely exacerbates the security dilemma and actually encourages isolationism and military independence. Japan's domestic politics aggravate the issue. For example, the Yasukuni shrine's honoring, instead of mourning, fallen war heroes, and its endorsement by Japanese politicians impairs international relations, as does the refusal to reconcile revisionist textbooks.⁸⁰ Germany and France have cooperated on history textbooks regarding World War II, but Japan, China, and South Korea have been unable to settle the issue.⁸¹ On the diplomatic front, Japan has made apologies and reparations for decades, but it is not enough to make China and South Korea feel secure. Until a great deal more diplomacy proves efficacious,

⁸⁰ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, loc. 2741–2766 of 8577.

⁸¹ Ibid., loc. 2766 of 8577.

the current international condition for Japan means, according to the *Japan Times*, “any boost in its military capabilities will meet strong opposition, particularly from China and the Koreas, which continue to insist that Japan’s alliance with the U.S. provides it with all the security it needs.”⁸² The lingering lack of trust, therefore, promotes normalization as Japan may feel the need to hedge against reliance on the United States.

As the rise of China continues, its neighbors are becoming increasingly wary. Many countries in the greater region are in favor of Japan’s military normalization. Australia, India, the Philippines, and Vietnam “have openly praised Japan’s actions,” in addition to the United States.⁸³ Even Russia has warmed relations with Japan to balance against their rising comrade. The Cold War is over, and each country no longer has to clearly pick sides, but alliances in both security and trade have proved invaluable to countries unable to compete with goliath neighbors on their own. The actions and influences of China, South Korea, North Korea, and Russia each play a role in Japanese military normalization, some in the form of sheer threat, and others as motive to temper normalization with diplomacy in the interest of alliances and trade.

A. CHINA

China’s extraordinary growth and territorial encroachments on islands disputed with Japan serve to bolster the impetus for Japanese military normalization. As China’s economy grows, its military grows faster, and the resulting power drives increased territorial disputes. It seems as though both Japan and China are increasing their militaries and blaming each other. In China’s case though, the growth is astonishing. According to the *Diplomat* in March 2015, “Beijing’s declared military budget grew fourfold over the last decade, whereas Tokyo’s military funding declined almost every year over that period. China spends more on its military than Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam combined.”⁸⁴ In addition to the vast military capability produced, China is

⁸² Jamie Metzl, “Japan’s Military Normalization,” *Japan Times*, March 6, 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/03/06/commentary/japan-commentary/japans-military-normalization/>.

⁸³ Leaf, “Promise and Potential Peril.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

emboldened to expand its reach. “China is aggressively asserting control of (among other areas) the East China Sea, where islands administered by Tokyo are subject to competing Japanese and Chinese claims and where rich fishing grounds, potential oil and gas deposits, and important trade routes lie.”⁸⁵

China’s military budget continues to rise, though it is now rising more slowly. For 2016, the budget growth rate was 7.6%, down from 10% growth in 2015, and 12.2% growth in 2014.⁸⁶ The Chinese official *Xinhua* news agency reported that Chinese military spending is now at \$146 billion.⁸⁷ At China’s annual legislative meeting, where the budget was announced, the *New York Times* reported that “Fu Ying, a spokeswoman for China’s legislature, the National People’s Congress, gave no sign that Beijing would soften its stance on disputes in the South China Sea, and she renewed China’s warnings to the United States not to intervene there.”⁸⁸ The third year in a row of declining growth still represents a defense budget that outpaces the growth of the economy.⁸⁹ It appears China is more committed to building its military than its economy.

Xinhua’s responses to international concerns refer to China’s large territory and population, claiming that China’s military spending is proportional and nothing to worry about.⁹⁰ It has written, for example, that “A responsible and major stakeholder like China needs sufficient strength to prevent a possible conflict or war lodged by miscalculating, hot-headed neighbors, and maintain a stable and peaceful Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole.”⁹¹ The “miscalculating, hot-headed neighbors” is likely

⁸⁵ Leaf, “Promise and Potential Peril.”

⁸⁶ “China’s Defense Budget,” GlobalSecurity.org, accessed September 4, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/budget.htm>.

⁸⁷ Chris Buckley and Jane Perlez, “China Military Budget to Rise Less Than 8%, Slower Than Usual,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/05/world/asia/china-military-spending.html?_r=0.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Megha Rajagopalan and Sui-Lee Wee, “China to Raise Defense Budget 10.1 Percent This Year in High-Tech Drive,” Reuters, March 5, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-parliament-defence-idUSKBN0M100Z20150305>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

a reference to nations that feel encroached upon, while the mention of the world is an attempt to assert a bid for future world super-power status.

In an annual report to China's parliament, the National People's Congress, Premier Li Keqiang said, "We will comprehensively strengthen modern logistics, step up national defense research and development of new- and high-technology weapons and equipment, and develop defense-related science and technology industries."⁹² One delegate to the congress, Lieutenant General Zhong Zhiming, was quoted as saying, "We must develop our weaponry and raise the standards of treatment for military personnel, only then will we be able to really strengthen our strategic combat effectiveness. Then no enemy will dare to bully us."⁹³

After years of rapidly expanding its military capability, China's advance on islands and disputed territories is doubly alarming to Japan and its neighbors. If anything serves as a tipping point toward alarmed reactions to Chinese encroachment, it is the stated goal of China to incorporate disputed outlying territories and islands. In the case of dispute with Japan, the tiny uninhabited islands known as Senkaku in Japanese and Daiyou in Chinese are a serious source of controversy. In their book, *The China-Japan Border Dispute*, Liao, Wiegand, and Hara say, "of all the contentious issues, perhaps the most tangible and threatening to diplomatic relations is the territorial dispute between China and Japan over the Daiyou/Senkaku Islands."⁹⁴ Since oil surveys were conducted in the early 1970s, Japan has maintained control of the islands while China also officially claims them.⁹⁵

Though it is now the fifth decade of dispute, there appears to be no sign of compromise or easing of tensions. China declared an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea in November 2013 and required all military and civilian aircraft to identify themselves upon entering. According to Liao, Wiegand, and Hara,

⁹² Rajagopalan and Wee, "China to Raise Defense."

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Tim F. Liao, Kimie Hara, and Krista E. Wiegand, *The China-Japan Border Dispute: Islands of Contention in Multidisciplinary Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2015), loc. 209 of 470, Kindle.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

“China sent air force jets to patrol the zone. The U.S. and Japan protested the declaration, and since the imposition of the ADIZ, Korean, Japanese, and U.S. military aircrafts [sic] have violated it, though without any incident.”⁹⁶

When justifying the achievement of what appears to be a clearly aggressive capability for the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, such as an amphibious marine unit, the struggle over disputed islands is always first on the list. According to the *Guardian* in December 2013, “Japan is to significantly increase its defense spending over the next five years to acquire surveillance drones, fighter jets, naval destroyers and amphibious vehicles to counteract China’s growing military activity in the region.”⁹⁷ As mentioned in chapter 2, Prime Minister Abe directly references China’s increased military spending to justify Japan’s own increase in the defense budget.⁹⁸

China presents itself as a threat to Japan both militarily, as in the cases of military expansion and the Senkaku/Daiyu islands dispute, and economically, by competing for markets around the world. Both aspects clearly help drive normalization of the Japanese military. In 2016, Japanese government sources said, “Japan will lease additional land ... to expand a military base in Djibouti, eastern Africa, as a counterweight to what it sees as growing Chinese influence in the region.”⁹⁹ Reporting in 2014 on reinterpreting Japan’s constitution to support collective self-defense, the *New York Times*, in an article headlined “Japan Announces a Military Shift to Thwart China,” quotes one analyst as stating, “The growing pressure from China has changed the political debate within Japan.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Liao, Wiegand, and Hara, *China-Japan Border Dispute*, loc. 224 of 470.

⁹⁷ McCurry, “Japan Increases Defence.”

⁹⁸ Abe and Tepperman, “Japan Is Back,” 7.

⁹⁹ Nobuhiro Kubo, “Japan to Expand Djibouti Military Base to Counter Chinese Influence,” Reuters, October 13, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-military-djibouti-idUSKCN12D0C4>.

¹⁰⁰ Martin Fackler and David E. Sanger, “Japan Announces a Military Shift to Thwart China,” *New York Times*, July 1, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/02/world/asia/japan-moves-to-permit-greater-use-of-its-military.html?_r=0.

B. SOUTH KOREA

South Korea is not a security threat in the traditional sense. It encourages Japanese military normalization as a partner in its alliance with the United States, while at the same time tempering it with public opposition remnant from World War II atrocities. The possibility that South Korea's loyalties could conceivably switch to China, based upon a possible solution to the North Korea problem and centuries of historical alliance, certainly does not discourage Japanese normalization.¹⁰¹

In South Korea there is still residual resentment from atrocities committed by Japan during World War II. Two main issues plague the Japanese-South Korean relationship: one is the Korean perception of a lack of sufficient apology on behalf of Japan, and the other is the lack of reconciliation for Japan's use of Korean "comfort women." Japanese efforts to normalize incur the incidental need to court the hearts, minds, and wallets of South Korea.

While World War II memory is fading, it still perpetuates concern over the growing strength of the Japanese military. While Japan would be an important ally against North Korea, South Korea is always mistrustful of expanding Japanese power. Though it is only a Self-Defense Force in name, its capability for attack is clear to all in the region.

In response to the landslide victory of the LDP in the upper house election in Japan in July 2016, the *New York Times* reported, "in South Korea, an editorial in Munhwa Ilbo, a right-leaning newspaper, said the election results 'opened the door for a Japan that can go to war,' though it added that a rearmed country 'will also help deter North Korea's nuclear threat and check the rising military power of China.'"¹⁰² The mention of alliance regarding a possible confrontation with North Korea or China reveals an optimistic reading of the current diplomatic relationship between Japan and South

¹⁰¹ Peter Murphy, "The Limits of the Japan-South Korea Military Relationship," *Diplomat*, September 21, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/the-limits-of-the-japan-south-korea-military-relationship/>.

¹⁰² Rich, "Japan Election."

Korea. Ultimately, despite Japan’s historical injustices, South Koreans know that democratic Japan is far less threatening than an unhinged North Korea.

Japan is already on track with military normalization, and South Korea provides little impediment. However, as Japan continues its military expansion, it would behoove its government to make a more apologetic effort toward South Korea and realize that the dynamic with China could change.

C. NORTH KOREA

The artillery and missiles fielded by North Korea, and pointed at both South Korea and Japan, are a devastating current driver for improving defenses and normalizing the Japanese military. North Korea’s perception of Japan is also influenced by negative memories from World War II, and the two countries’ standoff has been exacerbated by lack of economic reliance, poor diplomatic ties, and a series of abductions in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰³ North Korean missile testing aimed at Japan is a direct stimulus for Japan to improve its missile defense capability. Due to the unpredictability of North Korea, Japan’s behavior must be characterized as defensive and reactionary, but increased defenses can be perceived as offensively threatening.

According to Oh and Hassig, “The North Korean media insist that South Korea (as well as the United States and Japan, for that matter) is in the final stages of preparing an attack, and U.S.–ROK military exercises are routinely characterized as preparations for war.”¹⁰⁴ Because there is so little insight into the workings of North Korea, there is no way of confirming how much threat North Korea actually perceives from Japan and its alliance with the United States. However, North Korea clearly maintains an offensive posture. Should a conflict arise, North Korea may have less to lose. Due to the dictatorial nature of North Korea, that country may place less importance on individual lives, and the sacrifices of war may not run nearly as deep.¹⁰⁵ The testing of missiles and nuclear

¹⁰³ Oros and Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch*, loc. 1608 of 2901.

¹⁰⁴ Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig, “Military Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (January 2012): 84.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 86.

weapons are a daunting reminder and ample reason to upset the Japanese. In its insecurity, North Korea seems to perpetually provoke Japan.

A more recent round of North Korean missile launches into the Sea of Japan, in March 2017, gave the notion of Japanese military normalization a boost. According to the *Washington Post*, “as the threat from North Korea’s missiles grows, so the calls in Japan for a stronger military response are getting louder.”¹⁰⁶ The head of the LDP’s security committee told the *Washington Post*, “Japan can’t just wait until it’s destroyed. … It’s legally possible for Japan to strike an enemy base that’s launching a missile at us, but we don’t have the equipment or the capability.”¹⁰⁷ The connection between North Korea and Japanese normalization could not be clearer.

D. RUSSIA

Relations with neighboring Russia provide no incentive to slow Japan’s military normalization. Officially, Russia and Japan have yet to make peace since World War II. Relations have warmed between the two nations since the end of the Cold War, but according to Oros and Tatsumi, “Russia and Japan have not concluded a formal peace treaty to mark the end of World War II, largely due to an outstanding territorial dispute over four small islands north of the large Japanese island of Hokkaido.”¹⁰⁸ Despite the territorial dispute and a few accusations of incursions into Japanese airspace, Russia and Japan cooperate moderately well, as demonstrated by joint search and rescue exercises since 1998, trade between the two nations prospering since the 2000s, and the current diplomatic momentum discussed in the following text.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Anna Fifield, “As North Korea Fires Missiles, some in Japan Want the Ability to Launch Strikes,” *Washington Post*, March 27, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/as-north-korea-fires-missiles-some-in-japan-want-the-ability-to-launch-strikes/2017/03/26/a9568dd8-11f9-11e7-b2bb-417e331877d9_story.html?utm_term=.bffed6e0a834.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Oros and Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch*, loc. 1640 of 2901.

¹⁰⁹ Jiji Press, “Japan to Conduct Maritime Drills with Russian Navy,” *Japan Times*, October 22, 2014, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/10/22/national/japan-conduct-maritime-drills-russian-navy/#.V_CVZZMrL0E; Fiona Hill, “Gang of Two: Russia and Japan Make a Play for the Pacific,” Brookings Institution, November 27, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/gang-of-two-russia-and-japan-make-a-play-for-the-pacific/>.

As neighbors, Japan and Russia have a long history of discord. According to Brookings, “In the twentieth century, they fought two wars against each other, first in 1904–05, and again in 1945. Japan seized territory from Russia in the first; Russia seized territory from Japan in the second.”¹¹⁰ The mostly uninhabited islands of Etorofu (Iturup in Russian), Kunashiri, Shikotan, and the Habomai islet group are known as the Northern Territories in Japan and the southern Kuril Islands in Russia, and they have been claimed by both Tokyo and Moscow since World War II. According to Oros and Tatsumi, “During the Cold War, the Soviet Union constituted Japan’s largest perceived security threat. … The JSDF posture and deployments were designed largely around countering this threat and have been gradually reoriented in the two decades since the end of the Cold War.”¹¹¹ After the Cold War ended, Russian foreign policy has focused more on China, Europe, and the former Soviet states, than on East Asia, but it is still a formidable power in the region.¹¹²

Recently, diplomacy between Russia and Japan has been mostly optimistic. In November 2013, the first “two plus two” meeting took place between the defense and foreign ministers of both countries. The *Japan Times* quoted Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida at a news conference following the talks: “By deepening cooperation in many areas, including security, Japan and Russia will contribute to peace and stability in the region.”¹¹³ In May of 2016, Prime Minister Abe met President Putin in Russia despite the G7 policy to isolate Russia since the annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014.¹¹⁴ According to the *Diplomat*, Abe is focused on the relationship with Russia for two reasons: “The Abe administration’s judgment that closer relations with Russia are significant as a means of counterbalancing Chinese power in the region,” and “a personal

¹¹⁰ Hill, “Gang of Two.”

¹¹¹ Oros and Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch*, loc. 1647 of 2901.

¹¹² Ibid., loc. 1641 of 2901.

¹¹³ Mizuho Aoki, “Security Ties Forged with Russia,” *Japan Times*, November 2, 2013, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/11/02/national/japan-russia-to-ok-asia-security-cooperation-at-inaugural-two-plus-two-meet/#.V_AffZMrL0E.

¹¹⁴ James D. J. Brown, “Japan’s ‘New Approach’ to Russia,” *Diplomat*, June 18, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/japans-new-approach-to-russia/>.

commitment to resolve the territorial dispute with Russia over the Northern Territories before the end of his time in office.”¹¹⁵

Japanese military normalization is likely aided in spite of enhanced ties with Russia and optimistic diplomacy. Russian remilitarization is unnerving to the Japanese Self-Defense Forces who deal with increased Russian military presence in the region. In an interview by *Defense News*, the Chief of Staff of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, Admiral Tomohisa Takei, responded to a question about Russia’s provocative actions by explaining, “their jet bomber [sic] are flying with [sic] close range of our country and they are enhancing all of their military activities. So, we need to be cautious about Russia and these kind [sic] of activities.”¹¹⁶ Currently optimism outweighs caution, as Japanese leadership remains strategically focused, but Prime Minister Abe likely knows not to veer too far from United States policy should rapprochement fail and the U.S.-Japan standard resume.

The improved relationship between Japan and Russia highlights the political consequences of Japanese military normalization. Japan’s remilitarization is a small safeguard against Russia’s remilitarization, and gives Japan slightly more bargaining power with seemingly limited side effects. According to Brookings, “new ties between Russia and Japan would mark not only a breakthrough in their relations but also a significant shift in Northeast Asia’s political dynamic.”¹¹⁷ China seems to be the primary impetus in this burgeoning relationship. Both Japan and Russia are now secondary powers in the region. Normalization frees Japan to gain more autonomy from the United States, while also risking alienation. Japan is not a colony; it is free to accept the risks of shifting alliances in the region, and to develop its own methods to manage the regional security dilemma.

¹¹⁵ Brown, “Japan’s ‘New Approach.’”

¹¹⁶ Christopher P. Cavas, “Interview: Adm. Tomohisa Takei, Chief of Staff, Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force,” *Defense News*, March 30, 2016, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/show-daily/singapore-air-show/2016/03/30/admiral-tomohisa-takei-japanese-maritime-self-defense-force-jmsdf/81858684/>.

¹¹⁷ Hill, “Gang of Two.”

E. CONCLUSION

There are a myriad number of complicated relationships in the region, and Japanese military normalization further adds complexity. Only the notorious international relations situation in the Middle East compares to the volatility of Northeast Asia. North Korea is the most daunting outlier, but South Korea, Russia, and especially China must be considered as potent factors influencing the tempo of Japan's normalization.

Given the context of massive military buildup in China, nuclear North Korean volatility, questionable South Korean support, and the remilitarization of Russia, Japan should be perceived as a small counter-weight. In the wider context of the Northeast Asia region, the relationship between Japan and South Korea could be important as a front line to China. The alliance between the United States, Japan, and South Korea is the strongest barrier to any possible Chinese aggression. A long history of collaboration, coupled with similar democracies, and invaluable trade relations make the bond between America, Japan, and South Korea daunting to China. North Korea complicates the matter, and Russia lurks in the background. Not only do North Korea's nuclear and artillery capabilities add great stress to a tenuous situation, but North Korea's relationship with China also further exacerbates the regional dynamic. China could bolster North Korea purely to hedge against Western power and alliances. Russia is in a precarious situation given its alliance with China, while still wanting to keep its neighbor's rising power in check.

The reaction to Japanese military normalization from China, the two Koreas, and Russia continues to evolve, but in classic security dilemma terms: Japan's actions are certainly a response to Chinese and North Korean threats. Chinese military expansion coupled with the Senkaku Islands territorial dispute and saber rattling around a relatively new Chinese ADIZ give most Japanese nationalists enough reason for a normalized military force. The clear threat posed by North Korea, manifested by expanding strategic dangers, missile launches, and verbal intimidations is also reason enough. Japanese relations with South Korea and Russia must be handled with care, but these ultimately do not detract from normalization. Japan is one of the most advanced nations in the world, and is located in a very dangerous neighborhood. The influence of regional security issues on the normalization of the Japanese military is undeniable.

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IV. THE INFLUENCE OF ALLIANCE ISSUES

Throughout Japan's military evolution, the United States has been there. According to Oros and Tatsumi,

Regardless of what the future may bring, the fact that the United States was central to the development of Japan's postwar military capabilities and overall security posture is undisputed. Although Japan itself, naturally, determines the course of its own security policy, an examination of Japan's overall security policy would not be complete without careful consideration of the role of the United States in the creation, maintenance, and likely future course of Japan's security posture.¹¹⁸

Pacifism in Japanese society was a luxury borne of the U.S. alliance, and America must be given at least some credit in Japan's success story. It could be argued that the system set up after World War II, allowing reconstruction to flourish under the protection of the United States, enabled Japan to focus almost exclusively on business and trade—thereby facilitating Japan's astonishing economic rise. Generations since the establishment of Japan's pacifist constitution, could it be that the alliance that aided Japan's success is now eroding the pacifist stance upon which it was founded? Given U.S. pressure on Japan to increase its collective self-defense, missile defense, space defense, and military cooperation, is the U.S.-Japan alliance encouraging Japan's military normalization, or is Japan now normalizing irrespective of the alliance because the time has come and the threat has surpassed the tipping point?

The beginning of the Cold War pushed Japan to establish the Self-Defense Forces due to the insufficient mandate of the National Police Reserve, and the end of the Cold War may be responsible for pushing Japan to normalize its military due to the insufficient mandate of the Self-Defense Forces. Japan is normalizing the military with the acquisition of advanced weapons such as new helicopter carriers and amphibious assault units. The security policy is normalizing by allowing external military deployments such as those supporting the Iraq War, and by adopting collective self-defense. From the top down, normalization in Japan is further evident by the government's efforts to reinterpret

¹¹⁸ Oros and Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch*, loc. 1157 of 2901.

and eventually change the constitution, and their mandate in the form of the LDP landslide victory in the 2016 election. The alliance's influence in these factors is present in the expanding military integration, push for Japan to accept more of the military responsibilities, and direct pressure on Japan via cooperation on missile defense, maritime operations, and the space program. While the alliance acts as a force multiplier, there are also clear examples in which Japan is driving its own normalization, and Japanese fears of both abandonment and entanglement cannot be overlooked.

A. MORE INTEGRATION WITH THE UNITED STATES AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

Given the global reach of the United States, it shares strategic interests with Japan. Both nations are interested in keeping the peace on the Korean Peninsula, in Taiwan, and throughout Southeast Asia, in addition to the sea-lanes of communication from Northeast Asia all the way to the Persian Gulf.¹¹⁹ Stability in the region is of paramount concern to the first and third largest economies in the world, especially when the second largest economy (China) is in the same neighborhood.

One of Japan's current arguments for normalization is the alliance itself. Japan has matured and is ready for more self-reliance, which may originate with a greater share of the military responsibilities. Japan's potential rise to share more military obligations does not have to threaten the alliance; rather, it can bolster it. The United States has also long lauded Japanese military expansion. According to Oros and Tatsumi, "the U.S. goal of greater interoperability and joint capabilities of the JSDF and U.S. forces will most likely lead to further enhancements of JSDF capabilities and de facto increases in bi-national cooperation."¹²⁰ Prime Minister Abe has argued "that extant policies do not permit sufficient integration with U.S. forces that are essential to addressing Japan's

¹¹⁹ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 152.

¹²⁰ Oros and Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch*, loc. 1404 of 2901.

security needs.”¹²¹ Both sides of the U.S.-Japan alliance are pushing for normalization and improved alliance.

An advanced form of this alliance is collective self-defense. “The introduction of defense reforms, including measures that would allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense, suggests the potential to expand the parameters for U.S.-Japan defense cooperation, enhance coordination with like-minded countries in the Asia-Pacific, and establish a balance of power that favors regional stability.”¹²² Collective self-defense enhances the mission of the Self-Defense Forces, while bolstering the alliance at the same time.

B. THE STATE OF THE ALLIANCE

The alliance has evolved significantly since its inception. The Japanese Self-Defense Forces were established in 1954, when the emerging Cold War and demands of the United States under the alliance required more from Japan than the National Police Reserves could handle.¹²³ The JSDF has been incrementally improving and expanding for decades, but the alliance was initially more about security policy rather than shared military responsibilities. According to Pyle,

for most of the Cold War, there was no integration, no joint command, no interoperability, and limited consultation between the U.S. military stationed in Japan and the Self-Defense Forces. Beginning in the late 1990s, Japan steadily increased its military cooperation with U.S. forces in piecemeal ways made possible through revision of its military doctrines and defense guidelines as well as through new legislation.¹²⁴

The current geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia offers plenty of opportunity for official responses in support of the U.S.-Japan alliance. China’s military growth

¹²¹ Jonathan D. Pollack, “Japan’s Defense Policy Revision—Where Is Japan Headed?” Brookings Institute, August 17, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/08/17-japan-defense-policy-revision-pollack>.

¹²² Nicholas Szechnyi, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Prospects to Strengthen the Asia-Pacific Order,” in *Strategic Asia 2014–15: U.S. Alliances and Partnerships at the Center of Global Power*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis, Abraham M. Denmark, and Greg Chaffin (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2014), 34.

¹²³ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 45–46.

¹²⁴ Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 368.

coupled with its territorial encroachment, and North Korea's nuclear program coupled with its missile testing, provide all the provocation needed for normalization, but the nature of the alliance has given the U.S. some leverage in the process and either pushed Japan to militarize more aggressively than expected or gave it the added impetus to make great strides.

In New York City in April 2015, Japan and the United States revised and reaffirmed the guidelines for U.S.-Japan defense cooperation. The meeting is known as the Security Consultative Committee (2+2), and includes the Defense and Foreign Ministers of both countries. The resulting joint statement leaves no doubt about the strength of the alliance. Part of the statement reads:

The United States is actively implementing its rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. Central to this is the ironclad U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan, through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, including nuclear and conventional. Japan highly values U.S. engagement in the region. In this context, the Ministers reaffirmed the indispensable role of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in promoting regional peace, security, and prosperity.¹²⁵

The rest of the statement is mostly broad in nature, but some of it is clearly directed toward China: “The Ministers also reaffirmed that the Senkaku Islands are territories under the administration of Japan and therefore fall within the scope of the commitments under Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and that they oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan’s administration of these islands.”¹²⁶

Even the dire 3.11 disaster in Japan, in which the island of Honshu was struck with an earthquake, the resulting tsunami, and nuclear meltdown, demonstrated the U.S.-Japan alliance and enhanced it. The joint U.S.-Japan military rescue operation in response was named Operation Tomodachi, meaning “friendship” in Japanese. According to Szechnyi, “Operation Tomodachi was a watershed moment in the alliance in that it was

¹²⁵ “Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee: A Stronger Alliance for a Dynamic Security Environment, The New Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation,” U.S. Department of State, April 27, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/04/241125.htm>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

the ‘first time that full scale bilateral cooperation was carried out from decision-making to the implementation of response under the existing Japan-U.S. security arrangements.’’¹²⁷ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton remarked, “This unprecedented disaster has produced unprecedented cooperation between our two countries. In fact, our alliance, which was already strong and enduring, has become even more so.”¹²⁸

C. DIRECT PRESSURE ON JAPAN

It is difficult to find clear overt pressure by the United States on Japanese military normalization. Experts are aware of Japan’s sizeable domestic antimilitarism, and are careful regarding advancements in defense policy. U.S. pressure was more evident during the reign of the DPJ, when security policy and alliance diplomacy were most at risk. According to the *Washington Post*, months after the DPJ takeover of the Japanese government in 2009, the Obama administration threatened Japan with, “serious consequences if it renege[d] on a military realignment plan formulated to deal with a rising China.”¹²⁹ With the LDP back in power, especially under the Abe administration, Japan has resumed its perceived reliability as an ally, and pressures for normalization currently appear complimentary to Japan’s own agenda.

According to the *Council on Foreign Relations*,

The United States has long pressured Japan to take a more robust military posture. Though U.S. military bases in Japan serve a critical function for the United States—allowing it to project an image of strength in a potentially volatile region—American military resources are already spread thin worldwide, and U.S. officials have encouraged Japan pick up some of the slack, at least regionally.¹³⁰

The influence on Japan is varied. According to Oros and Tatsumi,

¹²⁷ Szechnyi, “U.S.-Japan Alliance,” 39.

¹²⁸ Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Interview with Kaho Izumitani of NHK,” U.S. Department of State, March 22, 2011, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/03/158840.htm>.

¹²⁹ John Pomfret and Blaine Harden, “U.S. Pressures Japan on Military Package,” *Washington Post*, October 22, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/21/AR2009102100746.html>.

¹³⁰ Lee Hudson Teslik, “Japan and Its Military,” Council on Foreign Relations, April 13, 2006, <http://www.cfr.org/japan/japan-its-military/p10439#p7>.

Through the provision of advanced weapons technology and institutional expertise, joint participation in strategic planning, formal negotiations, and informal daily interaction through alliance institutions as well as ad hoc cooperative exercises and commercial ventures, the United States influences Japan's national security policy in a multitude of ways, large and small.¹³¹

According to Andrew L. Oros in *Normalizing Japan*, “the United States has pressured Japan to actively participate in the development of missile defense since the early 1980s, when President Reagan successfully convinced Prime Minister Nakasone to support the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative.”¹³² Oros states:

U.S. pressure on Japan to share development costs and technical hurdles of missile defense not only led to Japan’s adoption of missile defense as an important new capability for the Self-Defense Forces but also led to a rearticulation of core security practices in early twenty-first century Japan, including such issues as preemption, the exercise of collective self-defense, the use of outer space, the export of weapons technology and components, and the interoperability of U.S. and Japanese forces and equipment.¹³³

The use of space in Japan’s national security strategy demonstrates one facet of normalization, and the development agreements with the United States place pressure on Japan to do more. According to Paul Kallender-Umezu in a 2015 *Defense News* article,

Japan’s Office of National Space Policy cemented a new 10-year space strategy that for the first time folds space policy into national security strategy, both to enhance the US-Japan alliance and to contain China. Under the third Basic Plan, Japan’s priorities go beyond building out its regional GPS-backup Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) navigation constellation, advancing its space situational awareness (SSA) capabilities and developing a maritime domain awareness (MDA) constellation.¹³⁴

The improved capabilities, both in progress and planned, show an increasingly advanced strategic position for Japan in the face of future uncertainties.

¹³¹ Oros and Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch*, loc. 1260 of 2901.

¹³² Oros, *Normalizing Japan*, 158.

¹³³ Ibid., 150.

¹³⁴ Paul Kallender-Umezu, “Japan Begins National Security Space Buildup,” *Defense News*, April 12, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/space/2015/04/12/japan-national-security-space-buildup/25412641/>.

D. AUTONOMOUS JAPAN AND FEAR OF ABANDONMENT/ENTANGLEMENT

Americans authored Article 9, with its pacifist roots, under the assumption that it would not last forever.¹³⁵ As discussed, the U.S. has placed pressure on Japan to increase military responsibilities and capabilities for decades. The contrast between the DPJ years and LDP power is revealing, but the security threat has also evolved over time. Today, under the LDP, Japan is advancing its military as fast as it can under technological, budget, and political constraints. As Gertken stated in 2013, “Japan’s attitude began to change in the 1990s, but especially over the past decade in the face of Chinese assertiveness and, to a lesser extent, Russian resurgence and North Korean provocations.”¹³⁶ American pressure on Japan to normalize appears to have remained relatively steady, while Japan’s acceptance of it has increased—likely catalyzed by exogenous threats.

The present state of the alliance is unquestionably strong. However, there remains some lingering doubt regarding the willingness of the United States to engage in battle with China over Japanese territorial issues. The escalation of any conflict is currently to be avoided given the global scale of cost likely for an Asia scenario. Economic and trade reliance on China weighs heavily; and despite the pivot, American forces are still focused on the Middle East, and increasingly on Russia. Much of the normalization of the Japanese military must be attributed to Japan’s desire for greater security independence and self-reliance, and the perceived role (or lack thereof) of the U.S. is part of that calculation.

As with any relationship, the U.S.-Japan alliance must come with decisions and compromises. According to Samuels,

America’s military and diplomatic engagements across the globe force Japan to make difficult choices, choices that are far from risk free. If Japan chooses to resist U.S. overtures to join its “coalitions of the willing” in military operations abroad or to deny the United States the use of its bases,

¹³⁵ Government of Japan, *Constitution of Japan*.

¹³⁶ Matt Gertken, “Japan’s Military Normalization and U.S. Relations,” *Stratfor*, August 8, 2013, <https://www.stratfor.com/video/japans-military-normalization-and-us-relations>.

it risks abandonment. Without U.S. protection, Japan would have to increase its military spending considerably and would likely become a nuclear power itself. The result would be dangerous for Japan and destabilizing for the entire region. On the other hand, by joining the United States and declaring its security role to be global, Japan risks becoming entangled in wars not of its own choosing.¹³⁷

Without risking a schism in U.S.-Japan relations, there is little choice between abandonment and entanglement—compromise and diplomacy must prevail against a major change in the international order.

In finding the delicate balance between abandonment and entanglement, the Japanese people advocate their own level of integration. According to Pyle, “Japan will seek maximum autonomy for its own purposes, for example, even as the alliance becomes more reciprocal. It will not wish to be hostage to the global strategy of the United States or to its relations with China and Korea.”¹³⁸

The idea of a pacifist island nation in the Pacific Ocean with thousands of shrines and temples is misleading, and it is easy to forget the economic might of Japan or its darker history. It does not have to be bowled over by the United States and can wield significant bargaining power. According to Pyle, “Japan is Japan. It is motivated by different imperatives, values, traditions, and practices. Japan’s readiness to tighten cooperation is not so much the result of shared values as it is of the realist appraisal of the value of the alliance.”¹³⁹ The U.S. has been pushing for Japanese military expansion for a long time, but despite that strong influence Japan appears to be setting its own pace for normalization.

E. CONCLUSION

The often-referenced Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty states, “Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that

¹³⁷ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 151.

¹³⁸ Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 369.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 368.

it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes.”¹⁴⁰ The statement is purposefully vague, and leaves room not just for interpretation, but also for each party’s governments to have significant control. The most important words are “act to meet the common danger,” and “in the territories under the administration of Japan.”¹⁴¹ Collective self-defense is outside of the treaty, but so are many other well-established aspects of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The strength of the alliance is clear and reiterated whenever there is opportunity. A break between the two nations is difficult to imagine at present. The ramifications of Japan without American support are probably entirely negative. An overly strengthened Japan would very likely destabilize the region by provoking the fears of Japan’s neighbors, which are exacerbated by bad memories. A possibly nuclear Japan would provide counterweight to China, but without the U.S. the relationship between India and Pakistan comes to mind, with China in the role of India.

Japan’s fear of U.S. abandonment is unlikely, but not impossible. The situation does call for some compromise on the part of Japan. Japan now wants alliance in the face of China disputes, but does not want to become a pawn in U.S.-China trade issues or a security situation with Taiwan. The same mindset exists for North Korea as well. Fortunately, interests between the two countries are aligned enough to maintain the relative safety of the alliance. However, economic factors and the power of China cannot be dismissed. According to Craig Mark, “some strategic analysts ultimately doubt the U.S. alliance, particularly whether the United States would actually use military force to help Japan defend the Senkaku/Daiyu Islands, if they were to be seized by China. Such underlying doubts may be the ultimate motivation for the recent changes to Japanese defense policy.”¹⁴²

The alliance with the United States plays a huge role in the pace and form of Japanese military normalization. The U.S. encourages the normalization by calling for

¹⁴⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Japan-U.S. Security Treaty,” January 19, 1960, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Mark, *Abe Restoration*, loc. 1565 of 4607.

greater Japanese responsibilities in the alliance, advancing defense research in the areas of missile and space defense, and increasing military capabilities via arms sales.¹⁴³ The impetus for U.S. pressure is likely bolstered by rising concern with China, but also may be driven by continued problems in the Middle East and efforts to relieve American budget pressures.¹⁴⁴ The completion of the U.S. pivot to Asia has arguably been delayed. The small possibility of alliance degradation also encourages normalization by motivating Japan to become more self-sustaining and on par as a global power.

External security threats are a primary factor, but Japanese military normalization vis-à-vis increased capability appears to be more self-driven as evidenced by the efforts of the current LDP government in contrast with historical leadership. However, the expanding scope of military operations would not be possible without American pressure and influence. In the end, Japan itself is ultimately responsible for its own policies, no matter how reactionary to external threats, and the United States' role is more of an assistant than a supervisor.

¹⁴³ Franz-Stefan Gady, “US Clears \$1.9 Billion Sale of KC-46A Tanker Aircraft to Japan,” *Diplomat*, September 23, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/us-clears-1-9-billion-sale-of-kc-46a-tanker-aircraft-to-japan/>.

¹⁴⁴ Szechnyi, “U.S.-Japan Alliance,” 59.

V. THE INFLUENCE OF JAPAN'S DEFENSE INDUSTRY

Japan's defense industry is growing and expanding in power and plays an important role in the normalization of Japan's military, but the evidence presented here suggests that the impact of the defense industry is secondary to those of regional security issues and the reactions of prime ministers, as industry is dependent on these political and security variables. With the exception perhaps of the recent militarization of space, the defense industry appears to be more in collusion with normalization rather than driving it, at least in comparison to its prior role in the 1930s. Today, Japan's defense industry is influencing outcomes by taking advantage of the regional security environment, while lobbying the increasingly supportive government, to influence and expand military spending in order to profit from the emerging situation while enhancing Japan's national security and therefore promoting normalization.

A. DEVELOPMENT

Like many aspects of postwar Japanese policy and security, the defense industry has developed incrementally over decades. Immediately after the war, Japan was constrained by the dissolution of Japan's industrial conglomerates, which were deemed conspirators with the military because they were thought to have pushed for defense production and thereby to have promoted imperialism.¹⁴⁵ However, the demands of the Korean War led the United States to end the defense production ban in 1952.¹⁴⁶ According to Hughes, "in preparing for the end of the occupation, Japan's policymakers never lost sight of the importance of maintaining an indigenous defense-production base to strengthen national autonomy and bolster the overall economy."¹⁴⁷

As early as the 1950s, Japanese business leaders wanted to build an arms-export industry, but Japan's first postwar prime minister, Yoshida, and finance leaders were

¹⁴⁵ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarization* (New York: Routledge, 2009), loc. 1650 of 3585, Kindle.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., loc. 1652 of 3585.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., loc. 1655 of 3585.

against it.¹⁴⁸ According to Pyle, “a defense industry not only could ensnare Japan in external military affairs but would also impose budgetary demands.”¹⁴⁹ Hughes states, “Japan cannot be said to have possessed anything akin to a fully fledged defense industry in the postwar period.”¹⁵⁰ Instead, they have maintained modest growth in comparison with other similar world economies.

B. EXPORT

The evidence does not show Japanese industry representatives specifically pushing for more military normalization, but industry’s level of involvement and its stake in the benefits continue to increase. The economic benefit of military contracts is clear, and it serves as additional incentive for both policymakers and the industry itself. As normalization evolves, so too does the role of businesses and politicians to support it. Japanese arms export policy demonstrates this dialectic well.

In an effort to adhere to the original plan of Yoshida and his finance leaders, Japan initiated a ban on arms exports in 1967. According to the *Diplomat*, it was

based on the “three principles” of not exporting arms to communist states, states subject to UN arms embargoes, and states involved in or likely to be involved in international conflicts. Eventually [in 1976], the policy evolved into a full-scale arms export ban, with only a few exceptions for technology transfers to the U.S. until Prime Minister Shinzo Abe overturned the ban in April 2014.¹⁵¹

The ban was not entirely removed; the Abe administration brought it back to the 1967 status, with the three principles modified for modern times. According to the Japanese Ministry of Defense:

Overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology will not be permitted when:

¹⁴⁸ Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 234.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Hughes, *Japan’s Remilitarization*, loc. 1648 of 3585.

¹⁵¹ Mina Pollmann, “Japan’s First Steps into the World of Arms Exports,” *Diplomat*, January 15, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/japans-first-steps-into-the-world-of-arms-exports/>.

- 1) The transfer violates obligations under treaties and other international agreements that Japan has concluded,
- 2) The transfer violates obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions, or
- 3) The defense equipment and technology is destined for a country party to a conflict (a country against which the United Nations Security Council is taking measures to maintain or restore international peace and security in the event of an armed attack).¹⁵²

According to the *New York Times*, the ban permits “the export of weapons only to allies and partners that agree not to sell them to third nations without Japanese approval.”¹⁵³

Though Abe removed the ban, it had been debated in the Japanese Diet for years before Abe was elected.¹⁵⁴ In the wake of 9/11, general attitudes about national security changed and some LDP politicians advocated easing arms export restrictions.¹⁵⁵ According to Hughes, “the LDP’s Defense Policy Subcommittee in 2004 proposed that the total ban be lifted.”¹⁵⁶ The rationale for lifting the ban is to promote a more holistic approach to Japan’s security, and in the words of the Ministry of Defense, “an appropriate overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology contributes to further active promotion of the maintenance of international peace and security.”¹⁵⁷ The government of Japan is calling itself a “Proactive Contributor to Peace.”¹⁵⁸

The lifting of the arms export ban has economic and strategic advantages as well. The new leniency allows companies to take advantage of recent defense budget increases,

¹⁵² Ministry of Defense of Japan, “The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology,” press release, April 1, 2014, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/pressrele/2014/140401_02.pdf.

¹⁵³ Martin Fackler, “Japan Ends Decades-Long Ban on Export of Weapons,” *New York Times*, April 1, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/world/asia/japan-ends-half-century-ban-on-weapons-exports.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s Re-emergence as a “Normal” Military Power* (London: Routledge, 2004), loc. 281 of 3598, Kindle.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., loc. 2241 of 3598.

¹⁵⁷ Ministry of Defense of Japan, “Three Principles.”

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

and helps boost the economy. Also, the indigenous defense industry will likely see long-term savings on research and development when they augment their sales with exports. In terms of Japanese national strategy, the *New York Times* reported, “Mr. Abe had finally decided to carry out the long-discussed change to achieve a larger strategic goal: augmenting Japan’s regional influence by offering its technologically sophisticated defense hardware to other countries locked in territorial disputes with an increasingly assertive China.”¹⁵⁹

Despite the clear incentive that expanded exports provide the domestic military industry, Japanese corporations have appeared somewhat timid about expanding production. Arms trade shows reveal Japanese military hardware remains secondary, and some companies worry about damaging their image and sales of commercial products.¹⁶⁰ Due to historical and defense spending constraints, Japan’s military technology production is embedded in its larger civilian production. According to Hughes, “Japan’s domestic defense production was subordinated to civilian developmental priorities, with the civilian sector drawing technological ‘spin-off’ from the military sector, and where necessary the smaller military sector deriving ‘spin-on’ technology from its civilian counterpart.”¹⁶¹ Some of Japan’s biggest companies have been supplying tanks and planes to the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (only) for years. However, according to the *New York Times*,

less than 1 percent of Japan’s industrial output is military-related, and only four Japanese companies are among the top 100 arms producers ranked by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a watchdog group. The biggest, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, earns less than a tenth the revenue from military sales as the top American military contractor, Lockheed Martin.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Fackler, “Japan Ends Ban.”

¹⁶⁰ David McNeill, “Tooling up for War: Can Japan Benefit from Lifting the Arms Export Ban?” *Japan Times*, June 28, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/06/28/national/politics-diplomacy/tooling-war-can-japan-benefit-lifting-arms-export-ban/#.WQazGFPyuT8>.

¹⁶¹ Hughes, *Japan’s Remilitarization*, loc. 1638 of 3585.

¹⁶² Jonathan Soble, “With Ban on Exports Lifted, Japan Arms Makers Cautiously Market Wares Abroad,” *New York Times*, July 12, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/13/business/international/with-ban-on-exports-lifted-japan-arms-makers-cautiously-market-wares-abroad.html>.

With the ban on exports lifted, Japanese corporations will likely expand their military production. *The New York Times* reports,

Japanese companies already sell a small number of high-tech military components to the United States, such as missile-tracking sensors used in ballistic missile defense systems, under exceptions to the export ban introduced beginning in the 1980s. With big, expensive new weapons systems increasingly being developed jointly by several countries, the end of the export ban should bring more opportunities.¹⁶³

For example, Mitsubishi helps build the guidance and rocket motor for Patriot missiles, and “U.S. defense officials have been pressuring Japan to export this technology, according to the Asian Nikkei Review.”¹⁶⁴

C. SPACE

While the military is still not strongly publicized in Japan there currently tends to be more clear complicity in the more secretive space industry, and the militarization of space is one apparent exception in which industry certainly created pressure for normalization. Japan started its space science program in the 1950s, and it has been relatively strong since the 1960s. While any military use of space was initially strictly forbidden, the evolution of the security situation and advances in space technology have caused a largely reactionary shift in policy. Japanese corporations made considerable advancements in space technology but, according to Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu, eventually found “nowhere to sell them in the commercial sphere but [...] increasing possibilities to do so in the military one.”¹⁶⁵ They state, “the strategy of militarizing Japanese space assets ... continues to reflect the economic interests and especially capabilities of the private makers of space technologies.”¹⁶⁶

After North Korea tested its Taepodong-1 missile, which flew over Japan in 1998, debate about the military use of space amplified. During Abe’s first term, China

¹⁶³ Soble, “Ban on Exports Lifted.”

¹⁶⁴ David McNeill, “Tooling up for War.”

¹⁶⁵ Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu, *In Defense of Japan*, 93–94.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

conducted an anti-satellite test in 2007, which successfully destroyed one of China's weather satellites; Abe was the only leader to denounce the test as a violation of Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty, as it contaminated the space environment.¹⁶⁷ A year later, the Basic Space Law of 2008 was enacted, and the Ministry of Defense put forth its "Basic Guidelines for Space Development and Use of Space" which states: "In light of the major change of environment introduced by the establishment of the Basic Space Law, the Ministry of Defense will consider the necessary steps to exploit possibilities for the development and use of space in new fields of security."¹⁶⁸ Thus, the Japanese militarization of space officially began.

Before the Basic Space Law, the military benefited from the inherent dual-use practicality of space assets, and companies pushed for orders. According to Hughes, "the government, driven by the need to improve autonomous intelligence capabilities, and by military-industrial interests keen to exploit procurement opportunities, introduced 'multi-purpose satellites' or 'intelligence-gathering satellites,'" using "this terminology to conceal the military nature of these satellites."¹⁶⁹ Saadia Pekkanen states, "it is difficult to divide space technology neatly between the civilian and the military realms, and probably well over 90 percent cuts across them both."¹⁷⁰

Japan's position on the use of space has clearly evolved. According to Moltz, "Japan has used the Basic Space Law to move from a policy of exclusively 'nonmilitary' uses of space to one of 'nonaggressive' uses of space that can include a military component."¹⁷¹ Hughes states, "Japan's deployment of spy satellites and ballistic missile defense has progressively pushed it to breach entirely the anti-militaristic principle on the peaceful use of space. Successive governments have incrementally shifted from the

¹⁶⁷ Moltz, *Asia's Space Race*, 64.

¹⁶⁸ "Basic Guidelines for Space Development and Use of Space," Ministry of Defense of Japan, Committee on Promotion of Space Development and Use, January 15, 2009, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/data/pdf/space_development.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarization*, loc. 1103 of 3585.

¹⁷⁰ Saadia M. Pekkanen, "All Eyes on China, but Japan May Be the Space Power to Watch," *Forbes*, May 30, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/saadiampekkanen/2015/05/30/all-eyes-on-china-but-japan-may-be-the-space-power-to-watch/#5d0915924476>.

¹⁷¹ Moltz, *Asia's Space Race*, 65.

original 1969 interpretation of ‘peaceful’ as meaning ‘non-military’ to emphasizing instead the ‘defensive’ military use of space.”¹⁷²

According to Moltz,

Japan’s efforts to develop its military space capabilities stem from at least three main security objectives: (1) to bolster its independent reconnaissance capability in regard to key threats, such as North Korea and China; (2) to facilitate communications with ships and troops deployed overseas on UN missions or mandates; and (3) to support its growing activities in the area of missile defense, which it officially joined with the United States in 2003.¹⁷³

The Japanese space industry likely fostered the transition from civil purpose to military use. Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu report that, “a specific set of Japanese corporations has shifted more visibly than ever before from commercialization to militarization of space-related technologies—a process that has had and will continue to have important implications for Japan’s space military capabilities for national defense.”¹⁷⁴

Hughes reports, “Japan’s participation in the militarization of space is clearly driven by its assessment of the regional security environment. Japanese policymakers believe that they must try to catch up with China’s burgeoning military space capabilities, and maintain parity with South Korea’s and India’s military interests in space.”¹⁷⁵ While the security impetus is clear, the voice and pressure from industry is also clear—it may not be the “driver” of the military use of space, but its role is vital and formative.

D. CONCLUSION

Japan’s military normalization may be steered by leadership, regional security, and alliance issues, but its blossoming defense industry is certainly at least part of the engine. From the space perspective, Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu state, “Japan’s militarization—meaning … the use of space for military purposes to support, enable, or

¹⁷² Hughes, *Japan’s Remilitarization*, loc. 1113 of 3585.

¹⁷³ Moltz, *Asia’s Space Race*, 63.

¹⁷⁴ Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu, *In Defense of Japan*, 20.

¹⁷⁵ Hughes, *Japan’s Remilitarization*, loc. 1135 of 3585.

conduct defensive, and, potentially, even offensive actions, to protect the homeland—has already become reality.”¹⁷⁶ National-security interests are clearly evident at every stage of Japanese normalization, but the role, scope, and influence of Japan’s defense industry show that it is a significant and growing factor in the ongoing normalization of the military.

In Japan, the defense industry exists as divisions of the large civilian industrial conglomerates, and their share is only a small percentage.¹⁷⁷ As the export ban was only overturned in 2014, it may take some time for development and subsequent higher profits to incentivize a greater defense lobbying effort. The space industry leads the way, but the rest of the defense industry may be close behind. The experts agree; the Japanese defense industry may not be driving military normalization yet, but they are evidence of its existence and integral to its progress.

¹⁷⁶ Pekkanen and Kallender-Umezu, *In Defense of Japan*, 223.

¹⁷⁷ Hughes, *Japan’s Re-emergence*, loc. 2216 of 3598.

VI. CONCLUSION

Let us imagine that, 10 or 20 or 50 years from now, Japanese normalization has been completed. The historical Japanese Self-Defense Forces have been transformed into a regular standing Army, Navy, and Air Force. The Japanese people debate security policy like any other powerhouse country with much at stake. People will wonder: How did it get there? Of course, there will be entire books on the contemporary history of Japan's military normalization, as there are books now about the progress up to this point. These future books will likely include chapters on leadership, security issues, industry, and alliances, among other sub-topics. Normalization is a complex process—it is not too far from the truth to say it might represent a transformation of the nation—and for any such complex process there are multiple impetuses. There will be nothing like the Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassination, however, on which to pinpoint the beginning of Japanese normalization. But certain factors will be identifiable, and some impetuses will carry more weight than others.

In any other country, with a different history and normal international constraints, the regional security environment would have a much greater bearing on the progress and utilization of the nation's military forces. Given Japan's unique situation, it takes more. The potential of what could be perceived as an obvious and overwhelming threat to the Japanese people, vis-à-vis some Chinese or North Korean aggression or threats to Japanese citizens abroad, does not seem to be enough to sway the opinions of millions of Japanese from their deeply ingrained pacifist ideology. Younger generations appear more amenable to the idea of normalization, but pacifism remains strong today. Only the right recipe of factors can affect the prevalence of this pacifist ideology, and security issues and economic factors have to be presented in the proper light by a strong and charismatic leader with well-defined goals. Such has been the case with Prime Ministers Koizumi and Abe.

Northeast Asia is currently in the midst of an arms build-up. Chinese military growth is unprecedented;¹⁷⁸ North Korean nuclear advancements are unprecedented;¹⁷⁹ South Korea's military spending is swelling;¹⁸⁰ and Japan is increasing its defense budget while bolstering the Self-Defense Forces and strengthening its alliances. The only difference among these countries is that Japan is constrained by its war history via the Constitution. The regional security environment role as a driving force is assured. However, the reaction of the Japanese, from the prime minister to the average citizen, dictates the nature and extent of the response.

Politics in Japan are as complex as anywhere in the world. Even if the Kantei were the most important factor driving normalization, the prime minister would still need votes and support from the majority of the Diet (two-thirds for constitutional change), electoral victory by his party, and, in the event of a campaign for constitutional change, a majority referendum from the people. In the security realm, the U.S.-Japan alliance must be strong and stable, and the regional security threat must be convincing enough to embolden advancement. No leader operates in a vacuum.

The answer to the question of whether a different prime minister would yield different results facing the same security environment is yes. Something as seemingly small as a shrine visit carries lasting repercussions in the security environment of Northeast Asia. Prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine, honoring Japan's war dead, have impeded diplomacy on multiple occasions. Anyone in power in Japan will be able to rise to a crisis and respond with temporary measures. But to change the fundamental direction of the country and leave a legacy of change takes some amount of inspiration as well.

The immediate post 9/11 period is more difficult to judge than the present, as leaders around the world felt pressure to aid the United States in its crisis and were

¹⁷⁸ Richard A. Bitzinger, "China's Double-Digit Defense Growth," *Foreign Affairs*, March 19, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-03-19/chinas-double-digit-defense-growth>.

¹⁷⁹ Katie Hunt, K. J. Kwon, and Jason Hanna, "North Korea Claims Successful Test of Nuclear Warhead," CNN, September 10, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/08/asia/north-korea-seismic-activity/>.

¹⁸⁰ Ankit Panda, "South Korea Is Planning a Huge Increase in Defense Spending," *Diplomat*, April 22, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/south-korea-is-planning-a-huge-increase-in-defense-spending/>.

alerted to the realities of the threat of terrorism. Koizumi may have been brasher than other Japanese leaders and reacted more quickly, but few national leaders anywhere in the world were against the United States immediately following the 9/11 attacks. Today, Prime Minister Abe appears more fervent. While North Korea is increasingly volatile and threatening nuclear disaster, and China is increasingly armed and aggressive, there is nothing at present to compare with the sheer impetus of 9/11 to motivate Japanese security policy. Yet normalization is advancing at a record pace under Abe. He has the legacy to live up to, and the determination to convince people that Japan should be a military power again. These factors—along with the growing impact of generational change—are beginning to change the thinking of ordinary Japanese.

Abe, Koizumi, and all of the leaders before them built upon the policies and institutions of their predecessors. Given the LDP's most recent momentum, it is plausible that the trajectory will continue. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution will not likely be amended in Abe's tenure, but it will likely be eventually if current leadership trends continue. Should this occur, Japan will accomplish normalization. The authors of the pacifist constitution expected the inevitable change when it was written, but whether this takes generations or centuries depends on the factors described in the previous pages. After World War II, this was educated conjecture, now it is analytically probable.

There is no single factor that is alone driving Japan's military normalization but, according to the arguments presented in this thesis, the role of prime minister seems to be the most important. Yet, there are innumerable factors acting in concert with one another that maintain the current pace of normalization. If these trends continue and the population accepts the new "image" of the nation and this new, more active role, Japan will, once again, become a normal military power consistent with its global standing. But the politics, security environment, alliances, and the military-industrial complex of Japan will all influence the ebb and flow of the normalization process and determine specifically when (and if) it will happen.

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